Poland and Galicia Jewish Research, a template for East European Jewish research, Part 2

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Explores methods for searching indexes and record sets from Poland and Galicia. Tools discussed include JewishGen.org, szukajwarchiwach.pl, Genealodzy.org, YadVashem.org, and other Jewish and civil indexed or browse-only records.

DEFINITIONS

Family History Sources

- Primary Source: An eyewitness account created during the time being researched.

- Secondary Source: A later record made by someone who did not experience the time period or events.

Record Sets

Collections of family history sources, most often kept in archives as original records, microfilm, online digital images, or on other media.

Recent records are generally not released to the public in order to protect privacy and prevent identity theft. Living descendants usually may request their ancestors' records.

Browsing

While there are major Polish records indexing efforts, it will be many decades before the majority of surviving records are indexed. When a record set is not yet indexed, then one may still browse the records to find the recorded events of family members. Most often, events are recorded, stored and cataloged in chronological order.

Transliteration

The representation or spelling of names and words in the characters of another alphabet. Transliteration standards have changed over time. For example, the transliteration of the capitals of India and China were once Bombay and Peking. Today they are Mumbai and Beijing.

The website SteveMorse.org offers instant, bi-directional transliteration of Hebrew, Yiddish, English, and Russian (both cursive and print): http://stevemorse.org/.

Polish character combinations and special characters were often transliterated to German character combinations and special characters.

Translation

When searching in Polish, "urodzin" refers to births, "małżenstwo" or "śluby" refers to marriages, and "zgony" refers to deaths, often abbreviated by U, M, and Z. "Mojzeszowy" refers to Jewish. "Spis ludności" refers to census.

The Jewish Registers in Poland from 1826-1942 were written in the Polish language except for 1868 -1917 when they were written in Russian. Some are also written in German.

The FamilySearch Wiki offers a number of translation helps:

- Polish: https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Polish_Word_List.

- Russian: https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Russian_Genealogical_Word_List.

- German: https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/German_Word_List.

Standardized spelling is a modern innovation. Earlier records are often spelled phonetically, particularly names. Word order often changes in another language.

Communities

As explained in Part 1 of this class, European vital records were created primarily at the local city, town and village level. The Yiddish word for town or village is "shtetl." We will use the term "communities" as adopted by JewishGen.

THE JEWISHGEN COMMUNITIES DATABASE

The Communities Database at JewishGen.org is designed to be a hub for your family research: http://www.jewishgen.org/Communities/Search.asp. Note that this database is not a world-wide gazetteer, but only contains Jewish communities. The separate JewishGen world-wide gazetteer is found here: http://www.jewishgen.org/Communities/LocTown.asp

After finding the entry for your Jewish community using the first link above, click on the Star of David icon to the left side of the shtetl's name to view all the information related to this community. Useful aspects of the community page include:

- Alternate names.

- A link to JewishGen Family Finder (JGFF) entries referencing this community. *Important note*: As used by JewishGen, "family finder" means a way to find your living cousins, not your ancestors. The number of matches is in parentheses.

- Links to any Yizkor books. "Yizkor" means memorial services held by Jews on certain holy days for deceased relatives or martyrs.

- Kehila links for this community. A "Kehila" is a Jewish community. Kehila pages are community memorials that may contain additional information. Content varies.

- JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR, with 2 million names) links for this community. For example, the Daws Road Cemetery in Scarborough, Ontario, Canada has a Lublin and vicinity burial section. The Lublin community page links to the cemetery's section.

- A history of the community's names and governmental jurisdictions from before WW I through post-WW II.

- Jewish population.

- Latitude, longitude, choice of on-line maps, and links to nearby Jewish communities.

- A "Search" button to search all indexed record sets for records that mention this community.

- An underlined link to the right of the first "Search" button leads to a full-featured search.

- A second "Search" button to search the entire JewishGen website for references to this community.
- A selection of links to other and off-site information relating to this community. Examples are museums, encyclopedia entries, and Jewish Records Indexing Poland (JRI Poland) town pages that list the record sets for this village that have been indexed.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs)

To stay abreast of new record sets and indexing for your communities, join and participate in one or more JewishGen hosted SIGs. The full list of regional and special topic SIGs may be found here: https://www.jewishgen.org/JewishGen/sigs.htm.

RECORD SETS AND INDEXES

Poland and Galicia's farthest reach includes parts of Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine. It's not possible in this syllabus to cover every set of records, every index, how they are accessed, and how they are organized. More information and instructions may be found on the FamilySearch Wiki along with current links: https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Poland_Jewish_Records .

JewishGen Complete List of Databases

http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/ – Use the database specified on your community page to find indexed records with some links to scans. Jewish Records Indexing—Poland includes 4.4 million vital records and other indices: http://www.jri-poland.org/.

Lost Shoebox Overview of Online Records for Poland

http://www.lostshoebox.com/poland/online-records/ – A map view of available scans and indexes arranged by Voivodeships (administrative districts). The numbers on the map refer to the items listed below.

Szukaj w Archiwach or Polish State Archives

http://szukajwarchiwach.pl/ – Search by the current Polish name of your community.

The PRADZIAD database or Database Registration Program, vital records and civil status

http://baza.archiwa.gov.pl/sezam/pradziad.php?l=en – Catalog of record sets found in Polish archives. Search town and "mojżeszowe."

National Archive in Krakow

http://www.ank.gov.pl/zasob-i-udostepnianie/informacje-o-archiwaliach/zbiory-online
– Includes scans of census records and civil registers. For civil registers, search "Akta stanu cywilnego Izraelickiego."

State Archive in Olsztyn

http://olsztyn.ap.gov.pl/baza/szukaj.php – Includes civil registries ("Urząd Stanu Cywilnego").

State Archive in Poznan/Posen

http://poznan.ap.gov.pl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=115&Itemid=80
– Includes indexed census records from 1870-1931 with link to image.

State Archive in Szczecin

http://www.szczecin.ap.gov.pl/iCmsModuleArchPublic/showDocuments/nrap/65
– Includes civil registry records by community, designated "Urząd Stanu Cywilnego" and linked from the left-hand sidebar. Browse images.

Genealogy in the Archives of Torun and Bydgoszcz

https://www.genealogiawarchiwach.pl/archiwum-front?locale=en –Images of civil records starting in 1874 for Pomorski and Kujawsko-pomorski. An English tutorial for using this site is found here: http://www.lostshoebox.com/tutorial/genealogia-w-archiwach/.

AGAD Central Archive of Historical Records of Galicia

http://www.agad.gov.pl/inwentarze/Mojz300x.xml – Scans of registry books from 137 Jewish communities dated 1789-1943. Look for a "galeria ze skanami" (gallery of scans) link.

State Archive in Wrocław

http://www.archeion.net/atom/index.php/;digitalobject/browse?mediatype=137 – Search for scans of civil registers using "Urząd Stanu Cywilnego."

Genealogical Records Indexing Project

http://metryki.genealodzy.pl/?lang=eng – Click the current Administrative Division for your community, then the county (from your community page). Look for "Denomination: "mojżeszowe" and/or "Urząd Stanu Cywilnego" meaning "Civil Registry Office," and then follow the links to browse the online images.

Geneteka

http://geneteka.genealodzy.pl – Search indexed records by name, place, event, and date.

The Knowles Collection: Jews of Europe

https://familysearch.org/family-trees – Genealogies of Jews from Europe.

Jewish Families in the German Empire

http://www.online-ofb.de/juden_nw/ – Index only, site in German. Almost 70,000 persons.

Pomeranian Genealogical Association (German: Pommern, Polish: Pomorski)

http://www.ptg.gda.pl – Search civil registries with "USC" (Urząd Stanu Cywilnego).

Poznan Project (German: Posen)

http://poznan-project.psnc.pl/ – Includes "civil registry" records.

National BaSIA Database (Wielkopolska Genealogical Society)

http://www.basia.famula.pl/en/zawartosc – Greater Poland and Kuyavian-Pomerania.

Miriam Weiner Routes to Roots Foundation

http://www.rtrfoundation.org/index.shtml – Data from her books, now updated.

Yad Vashem

http://yvng.yadvashem.org/advanced-search.html?language=en – Central Database of Shoah (holocaust) Victims' Names. Search by name and community. Finding your family in the database may lead to living cousins who submitted Pages of Testimony.

SUMMARY

Know your ancestral communities and their histories. Know the related archives, record sets and indexes. Polish and Galician online record sets and indexes are expanding on a daily basis. Be sure to subscribe to one or more JewishGen SIGs in order to stay informed.